

# World Dating Partners Case Study

UK dating services provider raises profits through improved email delivery, personalisation and management



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Tanya Fathers  
CEO  
World Dating Partners

World Dating Partners is a white label Internet dating services provider that enables companies, including TV & radio stations, social networks, fanzines, magazines, mobile service providers and publishing houses of any size, to buy and then brand a managed web-based dating service without any of the associated start-up, management and maintenance costs. World Dating Partners handles everything from site design and database management to payment processing, customer relationships and revenue-generating opportunities.

## 21 Million Online Users

Details of the 21 million users worldwide who have joined a World Dating Partners-driven dating service are held on the company's central Oracle database. It is vital for World Dating Partners to have a single, centralised database, rather than numerous smaller ones, in order for dating matches to be made across client sites. However, the database's size made it difficult for the company's in-house team of administrators to manage the custom-built email system – particularly when carrying out the segmentation and filtering required for targeted user mailings. It was also a hugely time-consuming task to manage bounce-backs and to ensure that user preferences for email and marketing correspondence were being correctly managed.



**World Dating Partners**  
Somerset, UK  
[www.worlddatingpartners.com](http://www.worlddatingpartners.com)

**Industry**  
Online Services / Community

**Site Members**  
21 Million

**Return on Investment**  
> Increased advertising revenues  
> Improved response rate  
> Reduced administration costs

**Key Benefits**  
> Enhanced database segmentation  
> Creation of 1-to-1 personalised emails  
> Improved and expedited email delivery  
> Real-time visibility into response data  
> Support for high-volume delivery

**Products & Services**  
> StrongMail® Email Message Studio  
> StrongDelivery Tools

**Integrated Business Assets**  
> Oracle Enterprise Database  
> Custom Marketing Application

## High-Level Project Goals

- > Increase email deliverability rates and visibility
- > Refine data segmentation capabilities
- > Gain ability to meet ISP delivery requirements
- > Streamline administration and reduce costs
- > Automate bounce processing
- > Enhance email delivery performance and scalability
- > Integrate with centralised Oracle database

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### **Email is the Core Business Driver**

World Dating Partners' business is driven by email. It is the principle way in which the company communicates with all members and ensures client sites are visited on a regular basis. It's not surprising, therefore, to learn that the company sends approximately two million emails per day to its opt-in membership database.

"We send five main kinds of email to our users," notes Tanya Fathers, CEO of World Dating Partners. "We notify users when their membership payments have been processed and also provide user-generated alerts – telling members when their profiles have been read or commented upon by other users. We also use email to provide customer support and answer technical or site etiquette questions."

However, World Dating Partners' most important communications are based on promotional emails that offer members selected discounts on goods that have been matched with their lifestyle preferences.

For example, if a site user selects 'dining out' as a keen interest, then they might receive promotional offers linked to restaurants in their area. These emails are particularly important to World Dating Partners and its customers, as they provide an additional and significant revenue stream.

### **Deliverability Issues**

In all cases, email deliverability is key, yet World Dating Partners could not identify how many emails were getting through to its members, the proportion that were being read or the percentage that were being acted upon. The company's database administrators were also under a lot of pressure to meet the stringent rules set by ISPs to limit the volume, timing and structure of email deliveries.

Tanya Fathers explains: "If you exceed ISP limits, your emails don't get through, and you've missed an opportunity to connect with a customer, demonstrate your value and generate additional revenue. You then damage the credibility of your IP address and run the risk of getting blacklisted, a major issue for all our customers."

Fathers was also aware that her company's emails were not always tested to see if the mix of HTML and text content was correctly balanced. She said: "We didn't want to send standard plain text emails, as they don't really excite customers, but we were equally aware that fully-fledged HTML emails can get blocked at many stages if the correct principles aren't adhered to."

### **Picking an Email Partner**

World Dating Partners knew that it had to make some changes to the way it approached email delivery and, as a result, carried out in-depth analysis of the market. World Dating Partners found many businesses opted for either custom-built solutions or outsourced applications – neither of which could deliver the control, management capabilities and deliverability levels needed. As a result, and after recommendations from a number of different sources, World Dating Partners selected StrongMail to provide an in-house, commercial-grade email marketing solution.

### **Campaign Improvements**

StrongMail's solution has greatly refined World Dating Partners' database segmentation capabilities, enabling the company to automatically carry out detailed database analysis to match each user's selected lifestyles, hobbies and site profiles with relevant purchasing opportunities. This creates much more targeted and personalised email campaigns, with content that appeals more specifically to each user.

World Dating Partners can now plan and execute many more campaigns within the same timeframe – and each one is far more effective. As a result, World Dating Partners has seen a marked improvement in the number of sales being made in response to promotional email offers.

World Dating Partners has also taken full advantage of StrongMail's Live Updates feature, which allows the company to deliver emails that meet ISPs' changing requirements.

StrongMail has a large, dedicated email deliverability team that works closely with ISPs around the world to understand their current volume and content controls.

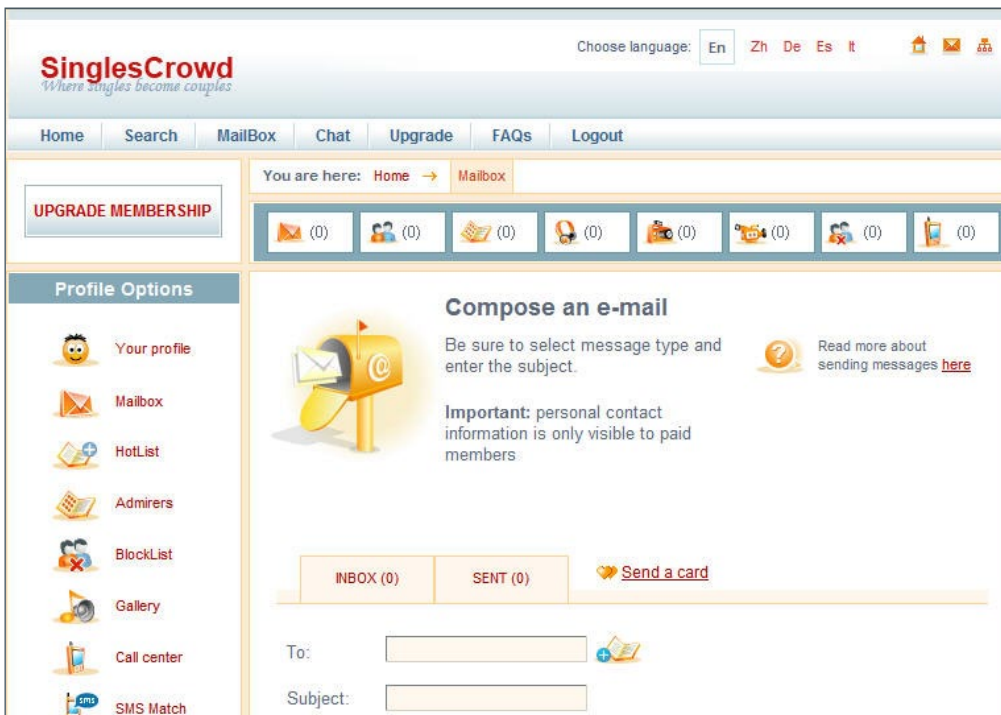
StrongMail's deliverability team gets access to the latest information, which, for example, might include number of connections allowed per IP or total volume of emails sent in a certain time frame. This information is then fed back to the software, and the updated rules are immediately applied to World Dating Partners' email marketing campaigns. In addition, StrongMail handles all bounce-backs, and provides World Dating Partners' administrators with reasons for each bounce so that it can be addressed, and the database amended accordingly.

### Targeted Messaging Drives Results

Tanya Fathers concludes: "Site members have responded in an extremely positive way to our revised email marketing strategy. Far from seeing World Dating Partners' correspondence as 'junk' and just hitting the delete key, they now take time to look at what's being sent to them – and, most importantly, are heeding the calls to action. That's great news for our customers and us as it dramatically improves the profitability of each site and our business as a whole."

Regarding the return on investment from the StrongMail solution, Fathers adds: "StrongMail has more than paid for itself in the short time that we've been using the solution – and we look forward to a very long and successful partnership together."

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In addition to member alerts and promotions, StrongMail powers the emails sent to other members from within the user interface of a World Dating Partner dating site



## About StrongMail Systems, Inc.

StrongMail's online marketing solutions for email and social media enable businesses to reach, engage and influence their target audience using the most powerful channels available to marketers today.

StrongMail gives email marketers the control and support they need to improve campaign performance, boost deliverability and lower costs, while also leveraging the power of social media to extend the reach of their campaigns and brand to new audiences. Combining an easy-to-use email marketing application, high-performance delivery system, viral-marketing tool, social media integration, and a wide range of deliverability, strategic and supporting services, StrongMail makes it possible for companies with all levels of resources and expertise to take advantage of its proven solutions.

Headquartered in Redwood City, CA, StrongMail's clients include global leaders across virtually every industry.

To learn more about StrongMail, please visit [www.strongmail.com](http://www.strongmail.com).

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## StrongMail's Products and Services

### Email Marketing Solutions

StrongMail's email marketing solutions empower marketers to drive the highest value from their email marketing programmes. Our wide range of solutions combine StrongMail's industry-leading platform with the strategic and deliverability expertise to drive conversions, increase brand awareness and improve customer satisfaction.

### Social Media Solutions

StrongMail's social media solutions were developed with a direct marketer's perspective in mind. Our products enable marketers to launch direct-response campaigns into social media and reach and identify key brand influencers across blogs, Twitter, Facebook and other social networks. Every social media product enables you to analyse and track campaign performance all the way through to the conversion so you can truly understand the business impact of your social media efforts.

### Customer Acquisition Solutions

StrongMail's customer acquisition solutions enable marketers to leverage the combined power of email, social media and expert strategy to expand their reach to new audiences. StrongMail's next-generation referral marketing platform enables you to identify key influencers, motivate them to share your brand with their networks and create powerful influencer segments for future remarketing efforts.

### Transactional Email Solutions

StrongMail's transactional email solutions enable marketers to take control of the branding, content and promotional elements of event-triggered email, such as order confirmations and shipping notices. A straight-forward integration with existing data sources and applications allows StrongMail to efficiently assemble and immediately deliver fully branded and personalised messages that properly reflect customer preferences, purchase history and previous interactions with your brand.

### Email Strategy and Optimisation

StrongMail complements its email marketing and social media solutions with a wide range of strategic services to provide the best practices, guidance and hands-on services that will enable you to optimise your online marketing programmes for greater returns. Whether you're looking to acquire new customers, increase customer loyalty or improve campaign performance, StrongMail has the expertise to drive the highest ROI from your programme investment.

### High-Performance Email Technology

StrongMail overcomes the challenges of high-volume email delivery with a highly scalable, reliable and manageable system that can easily replace and consolidate underperforming commercial or open source MTAs. Free up IT resources with a proven platform that was specifically designed to overcome the challenges of today's ever-changing sending environment.

